

WE CLAIM:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Cancelled)
2. (Currently Amended) The driving system according to Claim 14, wherein the neck bearing is supported on an inside in an upward direction on the driving spindle and in a downward direction toward an outside on an outer neck bearing ring.
3. (Currently Amended) The driving system according to Claim 14, wherein the neck bearing includes a neck bearing ring having a ball and socket-type construction on its underside resting on the complementarily spherical-shaped supporting surface.
4. (Currently Amended) ~~The driving system according to Claim 1,~~ A driving system for a separator having a centrifugal drum with a vertical axis of rotation, comprising:
a vertically aligned driving spindle configured to accommodate a centrifugal drum;
the driving spindle being arranged by a neck bearing and a footstep bearing in an opening of a drive housing;
the neck bearing being supported in an axially rigid and radially resilient manner on the machine housing;
the neck bearing being constructed as an angular ball bearing and supporting the centrifugal drum on a spherical-shaped supporting surface of the machine housing; and
wherein a center point of the spherical-shaped supporting surface is situated in an area of the footstep bearing.
5. (Currently Amended) The driving system according to Claim 14, wherein the spherical-shaped supporting surface is utilized for a weight-dependent frictional damping of the driving system.
6. (Previously Presented) The driving system according to Claim 3, wherein the spherical-shaped supporting surface is utilized for a weight-dependent frictional damping of the driving system.
7. (Cancelled)
8. (Cancelled)

9. (Currently Amended) ~~The driving system according to Claim 8,~~ A driving system for a separator having a centrifugal drum with a vertical axis of rotation, comprising:

a vertically aligned driving spindle configured to accommodate a centrifugal drum;

the driving spindle being arranged by a neck bearing and a footstep bearing in an opening of a drive housing;

the neck bearing being supported in an axially rigid and radially resilient manner on the machine housing;

the neck bearing being constructed as an angular ball bearing and supporting the centrifugal drum on a spherical-shaped supporting surface of the machine housing;

wherein a gap is disposed between an outer circumference of a neck bearing ring and an inner circumference of the drive housing;

wherein a sealing and spring ring bridges the gap; and

wherein the sealing and spring ring includes an O-ring which is arranged in a groove on an outer circumference of the neck bearing ring, from which it projects radially to an outside of the neck bearing ring.

10. (Currently Amended) The driving system according to Claim 14, wherein the footstep bearing is radially fixed in the drive housing and is axially disposed as a movable bearing.

11. (Currently Amended) The driving system according to Claim 14, wherein a supporting surface of ~~the~~ a neck bearing ring on the drive housing is connected with a lubricating system for lubricating the neck bearing and the footstep bearing.

12. (Currently Amended) The driving system according to Claim 14, wherein the neck bearing and the footstep bearing are connected by a duct around the driving spindle, so that the two bearings can be jointly lubricated.

13. (Currently Amended) The driving system according to Claim 14, wherein a first lubricating bore for a lubricant~~[[,]]~~ leads into an area around the driving spindle above the neck bearing.

14. (Previously Presented) The driving system according to Claim 13, wherein a second lubricating bore is provided for guiding lubricant to the footstep bearing.

15. (Previously Presented) The driving system of Claim 4, wherein the center point is situated in a center of the footstep bearing.

16. (Previously Presented) The driving system of Claim 13, wherein the lubricant is one of oil and grease.

17. (New) The driving system of Claim 9, wherein the neck bearing is supported on an inside in an upward direction on the driving spindle and in a downward direction toward an outside on an outer neck bearing ring.

18. (New) The driving system of Claim 9, wherein the neck bearing includes a neck bearing ring having a ball and socket-type construction on its underside resting on the complementarily spherical-shaped supporting surface.

19. (New) The driving system of Claim 9, wherein the spherical-shaped supporting surface is utilized for a weight-dependent frictional damping of the driving system.

20. (New) The driving system of Claim 9, wherein the footstep bearing is radially fixed in the drive housing and is axially disposed as a movable bearing.

21. (New) The driving system of Claim 9, wherein a supporting surface of the neck bearing ring on the drive housing is connected with a lubricating system for lubricating the neck bearing and the footstep bearing.

22. (New) The driving system of Claim 9, wherein the neck bearing and the footstep bearing are connected by a duct around the driving spindle, so that the two bearings can be jointly lubricated.

23. (New) The driving system of Claim 9, wherein a first lubricating bore for a lubricant leads into an area around the driving spindle above the neck bearing, and a second lubricating bore is provided for guiding lubricant to the footstep bearing.